

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT [281]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code section 256.7(5), the State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 24, “Community College Accreditation,” Iowa Administrative Code.

The rules in items 2 and 3 are being amended to conform to 2011 Iowa Acts, Senate File 470, sections 9 and 6, respectively. The other amendments are proposed to reflect the new accreditation process being put into place by the Higher Learning Commission, including the phasing out of accreditation by the Program to Evaluate Academic Quality. The agency discussed the proposed rule changes with representative from the following stakeholder groups: Iowa Association of Community College Presidents (IACCP), Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT), Community College Chief Academic Officers, Iowa Arts and Sciences Administrators (IASA), Community College Career and Technical Deans/Directors, Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), Community College Continuing Education Deans/Directors, Community College Business Officers, Community College Student Services Administrators (ICSSA), Community College Faculty Advisory Committee, Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee, and Community College Professional Development Advisory Committee.

After analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found.

An agencywide waiver provision is provided in 281—Chapter 4.

Interested individuals may make written comments on the proposed amendments on or before September 13, 2011, at 4:30 p.m. Comments on the proposed amendments should be directed to Colleen Hunt, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Community College Services, Iowa Department of

Education, 2nd floor, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146; telephone (515)281-0319; E-mail colleen.hunt@iowa.gov; or fax (515)281-6544.

A public hearing will be held on September 13, 2011, from 2 – 3 p.m. in the State Board room, second floor, Grimes State Office Building, East 14th Street and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, at which time persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments should contact and advise the Department of Education of their specific needs by calling (515) 281-3125.

These amendments are intended to implement 2011 Iowa Acts, Senate File 470, sections 6 and 9.

The following amendments are proposed.

Item 1. Amend rule **281—24.4(260C)**, introductory paragraph, as follows:

281—24.4(260C) Accreditation components and criteria—Higher Learning Commission. In order to be accredited by the state board of education and maintain accreditation status, a community college must meet the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission and additional state standards. ~~Accreditation shall be maintained either by the Program to Evaluate Academic Quality (PEAQ) or the alternative Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process.~~ The Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation are as follows:

Item 2. Amend paragraph **24.5(2)“a”** as follows:

a. ~~College parallel or transfer~~ Arts and sciences. The full-time teaching load of an instructor in ~~college parallel or transfer programs~~ arts and sciences courses shall be 15 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent, and shall not exceed a maximum of 16 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent. An instructor may also have a an additional teaching

assignment ~~outside of the normal school hours~~ beyond the maximum academic workload, provided the instructor ~~consents~~ and the community college administration mutually consent to this additional assignment and the total workload does not exceed the equivalent of ~~18~~ 22 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent thereof.

Item 3. Amend subrule **24.5(6)** as follows:

24.5(6) Strategic planning. The community college shall prepare a ~~five-year~~ strategic plan at least once every five years to guide the college and its decision-making. ~~Consideration shall be given to the five-year statewide strategic plan as required by Iowa Code section 256.31(4)(a), in the development of the college's strategic plan.~~

Item 4. Amend subrule **24.5(7)**, paragraph “b,” subparagraph (7), as follows:

(7) Specific activities that ensure that faculty attain and demonstrate instructional competencies and knowledge in their subject or technical areas. It is recommended that the plan identify faculty minimum competencies and explain the method or methods of determining and assessing competencies. It is recommended that the plan contain procedures for reporting faculty progress. It is recommended that faculty be notified at least once a year of their progress in attaining competencies. ~~It is recommended that the plan include policies and provisions for length of provisional status for faculty who do not meet the minimum standards in Iowa Code section 260C.48. It is recommended that provisional status of individual faculty members not exceed five years.~~

Item 5. Amend subrule **24.5(7)**, paragraph “c,” as follows:

c. The department of education shall notify the community college when the department requires that a modified quality faculty plan be submitted. The department shall review the plan during the state accreditation ~~on-site visits~~ evaluations to ensure each community

college's compliance and progress in implementing a quality faculty plan as approved by the local board of directors. The department shall review the following:

Item 6. Amend subrule **24.6(1)**, paragraph "b," as follows:

b. The department of education shall conduct ~~an~~ a comprehensive, on-site accreditation evaluation of each community college ~~during the same academic year as the evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~ on a ten year interval. An interim evaluation midway between comprehensive evaluations shall also be conducted. The department shall prepare a staggered evaluation schedule which sets no more than three comprehensive or interim evaluations in any one year. No comprehensive or interim evaluation shall be required for continued accreditation prior to a community college's first evaluation under the schedule. The department shall have the authority to conduct focus evaluation visits as needed.

Item 7. Amend subrule **24.6(4)**, paragraph "a," as follows:

a. Accreditation granted. Continuation of accreditation, if granted, shall be for a ~~term~~ consistent with the term of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools ten year term; however, approval for a lesser term may be granted by the state board of education if the board determines that conditions so warrant.